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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Membership

Representative Ray Allen



Biographical Information

Representing Grand Prairie, Irving, and Dallas in Dallas County

A sixth generation Texan, Representative Ray Allen is a conservative voice for the people of District 106. He serves as Chairman of the House Committee on Corrections and as a member of the House Committee on Government Reform. Representative Allen has previously served as Vice-Chairman of the Environmental Regulations Committee and as a member of the Committee on House Administration, Select Committee on Constitutional Revision, the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, and the House Public Safety Committee. He has chaired numerous sub-committees focusing on issues related to criminal justice, corrections reform, and the environment. Elected to the Texas Legislature in 1992, Ray is the first Republican to serve his district in the Texas House of Representatives since statehood. Representative Allen has authored or jointly authored 326 bills with more than 130 now in law. Many of his successful bills have been noted as major state laws by independent Senate and House Research Organizations. Some of the highlights of Representative Allen's service are legislation which enhanced the Texas private sector prison industries program and created its regulatory authority, a Teenage Mothers Parenting and Mentoring program within the Texas Youth Commission, the sex offender registration and notification statutes better known as "Ashley's Laws," crime victims' rights laws, Texas' concealed carry law and revisions to Texas Clean Air Act. Below is a brief summary of those and other measures passed by Representative Allen over his career as a state lawmaker:

78th Session (2003)

- During the 78th Legislative Session, Representative Allen worked with several other legislators to jointly author HB 9, a major homeland

security initiative designed to address concerns brought to light by the Governor's Homeland Security Task Force. Representative Allen was the principal legislator working on the open-records issues in HB 9. HB 9 makes confidential certain specific, highly sensitive information related to emergency response providers, vulnerability assessments, construction or assembly of weapons, encryption and security keys for communications systems, critical infrastructure, and security systems. Allen drafted provisions to protect sensitive information about the critical infrastructure in this state without cutting off the public's right to know how their government is working. The Austin American Statesman editorial board praised his efforts: "An example of a good approach to homeland security is House Bill 1191 [contained in House Bill 9] by Representative Ray Allen; R-Grand Prairie....It's not a blanket bill but one tailored for certain events, and the confidentiality provisions refer to acts of terrorism, tactical plans and vulnerability risks only."

- HB 2668 by Representative Allen signals a significant shift in Texas' drug policy and ensures that first time low-level drug offenders are afforded an opportunity for effective drug treatment, while prosecutors retain the ability to prosecute for felony crimes. HB 2668 frees up roughly 4,000 prison beds for higher priority violent offenders, saves Texas taxpayers at least \$30 million in cost avoidance, and gives prosecutors the flexibility they need to deal with drug cases.

- Working with other legislators, the Office of the Governor, the Office of the Speaker of the House, and the Board of Medical Examiners, Allen crafted HB 6/SB 104 to address much needed reforms and increase efficiencies at the Board of Medical Examiners. In a press release, Representative Allen stated, "This bill will enable the Texas Board of Medical Examiners to remove bad doctors from the practice of medicine. We are going to start prioritizing repeat offenders and get them out of the system as quickly as possible. At the same time, we're empowering the Board to dismiss frivolous and harassing complaints and exonerate doctors falsely accused of wrongdoing. It's good medicine for doctors and patients."

- Responding to the high cost of medical malpractice liability insurance driving doctors out of business and outcries about lawsuit abuses, the Legislature passed HB 4, a major tort reform initiative which Representative Allen joint authored. Among other provisions, HB 4 caps non-economic damages in health care claims at \$250,000 per claimant against doctors or other health care providers.

- Representative Allen sponsored SB 319, the Prenatal Protection Act. SB 319 creates criminal penalties for individuals who cause death or injury to an unborn child where a mother hopes and plans for live birth and allows parents to sue for the wrongful death of their unborn child in cases such as drunk driving and physical assault.

- Allen's HB 1483 combines the Board of Nurse Examiners and the Board of Vocational Nurse Examiners, creating a single board of nursing and a single licensing act for registered nurses and licensed vocational nurses, which saves taxpayers dollars and streamlines complaint procedures and information requests.

77th Session (2001)

- HB 3149, amended to HB 776, instructs the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to create a database of information relating to threats against peace officers and to disseminate this information to law enforcement officials. This database, which was proposed by Irving Police Officer Aubrey Hawkins only months before his tragic death, is designed to allow officers to exercise special caution when dealing with individuals who have made threats against peace officers.

- HB 2114, named "Christine's Law" after slain Grand Prairie teen Christine Blubaugh, was amended onto SB 314 and prohibits the owner or operator of a cemetery from interring the remains of an individual who is convicted of or found to be responsible for murder or capital murder, intoxication manslaughter, or criminally negligent homicide in the same cemetery that the victim of that act is interred.
- Representative Allen sponsored SB 1380, which ensures that all registered sex offenders submit DNA samples, strengthens current law in regard to the collection of DNA, clarifies language regarding offenders who committed their crime in another state or under federal or military law. The bill also ensures first-time sex offenders and those with multiple convictions pay for the cost of publishing their name in the newspaper, and it requires termination of registration for those offenders who receive a pardon or have their case set aside on appeal. SB1380 also requires lifetime registration for certain offenders, clearing the way for federal crime money to be awarded to Texas. HB 588, which Representative Allen joint-authored during the 77th Session, expands the list of offenses for which DNA samples are taken from Texas inmates to create a DNA record to include all felony offenses. Some offenses in this category include: Robbery, Aggravated Robbery, and Injury to a Child, Elderly or Disabled Person. HB 588 is contingent upon federal grants to fund this expansion of the state's Combined DNA Indexing System.
- Representative Allen joint-authored HB 1118, a sweeping reform of the juvenile justice system, which eliminates automatic sex offender registration for juveniles and requires a juvenile court to determine whether the interests of the public require registration of juvenile offenders. If the court finds that registration is required, then juvenile registration information is restricted to use by law enforcement agencies and is not public information.
- HB 1617 clears the way for expansion of the Private Sector Prison Industries Enhancement Program in Texas. Since Representative Allen authored the enabling legislation in 1993, inmates have paid more than \$7 million to the state of Texas, taxes, crime victims, and inmate family members.
- Representative Allen joint-authored HB 772, which modifies the current special needs parole program to address the growing problem of geriatric and chronically ill inmates in Texas prisons. Now called Medically Recommended Intensive Supervision, the program allows the parole board to consider inmates who require long term, 24-hour nursing care for release, under strict adherence to electronic monitoring, super-intensive supervision, or other appropriate observation measures, to alternative facilities where federal funds can be used to defray some of their expenses. The MRIS program was expanded during the 78th Legislative session to include 3G (aggravated) offenders who are not serving a death sentence or who are not required to register as a sex offender. Before this inclusion roughly 2,400 inmates, of the more than 6,000 in the elderly population, were not eligible.

76th Session (1999)

- H.B. 2145 and H.B.1188 expand sex-offender registration and notification requirements, close loopholes available to sex-offenders, creates a sex-offender DNA database and makes more information regarding criminals and sex-offenders available to the public.
- S.B. 1607 creates a Teenage Mothers Parenting and Mentoring program within the Texas Youth Commission. Young mothers within TYC will be afforded the opportunity to be with their child, instead of separating them from each other. The mother and child will have the opportunity to learn, grow and nurture during the first three years of the child's life.

- S.B. 766 creates a voluntary program for older grandfathered industrial plants to comply with the Texas Clean Air Act and become permitted with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission. If the older plants do not become permitted by September 2001, they face stiff fines on the amount of excessive air pollutants that they release into the atmosphere.

75th Session (1997)

- S.B. 875, sponsored by Representative Allen, enhanced Texas' existing sex offender registration and notification program by adding new crimes to the list of reportable convictions, particularly pedophile threshold crimes. It requires lifetime registration for offenses such as sexual assault, incest, compelling a minor to commit prostitution, and child pornography. All other sex offenders must register for at least 10 years. In addition, S.B. 875 addresses procedures used to register and monitor sex offenders and imposes tough criminal penalties for parole violators.
- H.B. 1185 targets the fraudulent practices of individuals and groups such as the so-called "Republic of Texas." H.B. 1185, jointly authored by Representative Allen and Representative Hightower, contains criminal penalties that will prevent law-abiding citizens from being harassed by illegitimate entities.
- H.B. 3019 restores standard exemptions for facilities which are not sources of significant air pollution. In addition it contains provisions which directed the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission to create a system for significant voluntary air pollution reductions for Texas companies currently operating "grandfathered facilities" not subject to permitting requirements.

74th Session (1995)

- H.B. 1379 and S.B. 267, both passed in 1995, require strict sex offender registration guidelines, lifetime registration of serious sex offenders and public notification of sex offenders who are convicted of a crime against children under the age of 17. Thousands of Texas sex offenders are now under constant scrutiny by law enforcement officials, crime victims, and neighborhood watch groups.
- Representative Allen jointly authored S.B. 60, the Concealed Handgun Licensing and Training Law, which allows law-abiding Texans to apply for a license to carry a concealed handgun after an extensive background check by the Department of Public Safety and after receiving training from a certified handgun instructor.

73rd Session (1993)

- H.B. 1718, 1993's Working Prisoner Act, puts prisoners to work for private sector companies in factories behind prison walls earning wages to pay for their own incarceration, restitution to crime victims, and family support costs. Representative Allen updated this bill during the 75th Session to more effectively safeguard against worker displacement and unfair competition with the private sector while at the same time expanding the program to include three times as many inmates.

Honors and Activities:

Representative Allen has received numerous honors in his legislative career, including the Texas Eagle Forum's "Freedom and Family Award" recognizing outstanding conservative legislators, Texas Association of Business "Fighter for Free Enterprise Award," Texas Builders' Association Legislative Honor Roll, the International Police Association's "Award of Excellence" for support of law enforcement, the New Directions in Corrections "Legislative Faith Award," Legislative Leadership Awards from Mothers Against Drunk Driving, numerous recognitions from the Texas Conservative Coalition, the Texas Corrections Association, the state's law enforcement organizations, the Free Market Foundation, and various crime victims' organizations.

Allen was cited as "Honorable Mention" in Capitol Inside's Top Ten Legislators of the 78th Session. The Dallas Morning News called him, "a thinking man's conservative" and has recognized his leadership in the house, twice listing him as an effective and "up-and-coming" legislator. In addition to his legislative work, Representative Allen also serves in an advisory role on many government and private boards and is involved in civic and professional organizations, including the Private Sector Prison Industries Enhancement Authority, Grand Prairie State Bank Advisory Board, Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce Board, National Correctional Industries Association Advisory Board, and National Conference of State Legislators' Criminal Justice Committee.

Currently, Representative Allen is chairman of the American Legislative Exchange Council's Criminal Justice Task Force, the Texas House Republican Caucus's Criminal Justice Task Force, and the Texas Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus. He and his wife Debbie have five children and seven grandchildren.

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